orange

【オレンジ】

高野苺

TAKANO ICHIGO presents
ACTION COMICS
published by FUTABASHA

"DID YOU GET...
...A LETTER?"
WHEN SUWA SAID THAT TO ME...
"SUWA GOT A LETTER, TOO!"
...WAS MY FIRST THOUGHT.

IN THE SUMMER OF OUR 16TH YEAR,
WE EACH RECEIVED A LETTER FROM OURSELVES, TEN YEARS IN THE FUTURE.

CHAPTER 9

ICHIGO TAKANO

THIS LETTER...
...WAS DELIVERED TO ME.
(HIROTO SUWA)
諏訪広人
YOU CAN READ IT.
DID YOU GET YOURS THE DAY OF THE OPENING CEREMONY?
YEAH.
AH! MINE CAME IN THE SAME KIND OF ENVELOPE.
REALLY?

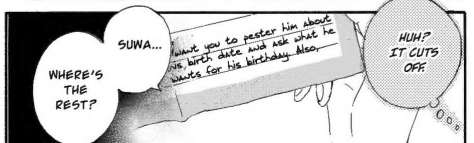
Hiroto Suwa-sama,
How are you, my 16-year-old self?
I'm writing this letter from your future.
Actually, I have an important favor to ask you.
I want you to erase the regret that haunts me.
I don't want you to experience the same regret and go down the same path that I did.
REGRET...
IT WARNS AGAINST INVITING KAKERU TO WALK HOME WITH US ON THE DAY OF THE OPENING CEREMONY...
...AND INSTRUCTS ME TO GET HIM TO JOIN THE SOCCER CLUB.
BUT I DIDN'T READ THE LETTER...
...'TIL AFTER GETTING HOME ON THE DAY OF THE CEREMONY, SO I COULDN'T CHANGE THAT.

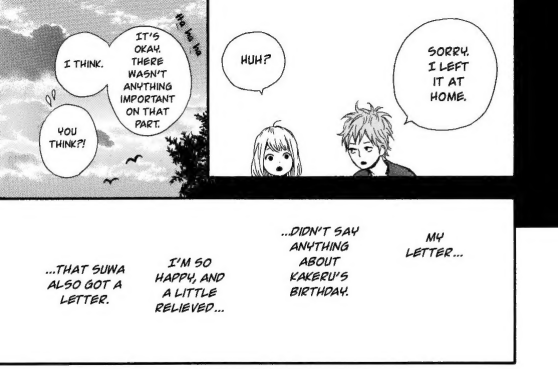
...THANKS TO SUWA'S LETTER.
BUT...
...KAKERU JOINED THE CLUB...
I HAD A LOT MORE THINGS TO DO.
YEAH.
IS THAT ALL SO FAR?
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
IT ALSO SAYS IT WANTS ME TO SAVE KAKERU.
MAYBE EVERYTHING HE'S DONE RECENTLY HAS BEEN FOR KAKERU'S SAKE, TOO.
THERE'S ONLY ONE REGRET: NOT BEING ABLE TO SAVE KAKERU.
SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY, NAHO.
REGRET...
MAYBE THE FUTURE ME AND THE FUTURE SUWA ARE TALKING ABOUT THE SAME THING.

SEPTEMBER 14TH. THIS IS KAKERU'S BIRTHDAY.

KAKERU HASN'T SAID ANYTHING ABOUT IT, AND NONE OF US FIND OUT UNTIL MUCH LATER. SO ALL WE COULD DO THEN WAS SAY WE'D CELEBRATE HIS BIRTHDAY THE NEXT YEAR AND ASK WHAT HE'D WANT FOR A PRESENT. BUT WE NEVER DID GET TO CELEBRATE HIS 18TH BIRTHDAY.

BEFORE THIS DAY COMES, I WANT YOU TO PESTER HIM ABOUT HIS BIRTH DATE AND ASK WHAT HE WANTS FOR HIS BIRTHDAY. ALSO,


SUWA...
WHERE'S THE REST?
I want you to pester him about his birth date and ask what he wants for his birthday. Also,
HUH? IT CUTS OFF.



MY LETTER...

...DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT KAKERU'S BIRTHDAY.

I'M SO HAPPY, AND A LITTLE RELIEVED...

...THAT SUWA ALSO GOT A LETTER.

KAKERU, WHEN'S YOUR BIRTHDAY?
THAT'S OUT OF THE BLUE...
MINE...
...IS NOVEMBER 27TH, SO I THOUGHT I'D WORK IN A WAY TO ADVERTISE IT.
ISN'T IT TOO EARLY? THAT'S TWO MONTHS AWAY.
I'm gonna forget it.

HAVING SUWA AT MY SIDE IS REASSURING.

W-WHAT A COINCIDENCE!
W-WOW!
THAT'S NEXT WEEK! NAHO, DID YOU HEAR THAT?
SEPTEMBER 14TH! THAT'S RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER!
?
HUH?!
MINE IS SEPTEMBER 14TH.
FOR REAL? I'D LOVE THAT.
I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO IT.
LET'S ALL CELEBRATE IT!
I'LL HAVE MY MOM MAKE A CAKE!
IS THERE SOMETHING YOU WANT?
KAKERU!
GOOD. THAT WENT WELL.
HEE
ニヤ
ニヤ
HEE

WHAT?
THERE IS SOMETHING I WANT...
EVERYONE WAS TALKING ABOUT IT LAST TIME.
I'D LIKE TO SEE A SOCCER MATCH AT MATSUMOTO STADIUM.
WE'RE JUST ASKING.
WE DIDN'T MENTION PRESENTS.
WUH? I DON'T NEED PRESENTS OR ANYTHING.
OKAY! SO YOU WANT A TICKET TO A SOCCER GAME!
AH, THAT'S IT!
MATSUMOTO YAMAGA!
WHAT'S THE NAME OF MATSUMOTO'S SOCCER TEAM AGAIN?
KAKERU, HOW'S IT GOING?
IS THERE SOMETHING YOU WANT THESE DAYS?
GIGGLE
I can't wait!

SORIGESU.
MANGA, HUH? SURE.
THEN... I WANNA READ THAT MANGA YOU SAID WAS HILARIOUS.
What was it again?
HUH?
I DON'T NEED PRESENTS OR ANYTHING.
What do you mean, "how's it going"
DUMMY, I WASN'T TALKING ABOUT A PRESENT.
KAKERU...
IS THERE ANYTHING THAT YOU WANT?
It's not gonna be a present!
Just the first volume is fine.
You're a dope.
...I HAVE TO GET TO THE CLUB, SO SEE YOU LATER.
WELL...
YOU STILL HAVE TIME.
Suwa isn't even here yet.
I DON'T NEED ANY PRESENTS.
IT SEEMS AZU, TAKAKO, AND HAGITA-KUN ARE ALREADY GETTING ME SOMETHING.

DON'T YOU HAVE ONE OF THOSE CLUB BAGS LIKE SUWA?
OH. NO, I DON'T.
YOU'RE ALWAYS CARRYING THAT BAG AROUND.
KAKERU...
I USED TO...
...BUT WHEN WE MOVED HERE FROM TOKYO...
...MY MOM THREW IT OUT, SINCE THE IDEA WAS THAT I WOULDN'T JOIN ANY CLUBS.
...
I SEE.
GOT IT!
I MEAN... I DON'T NEED AN EXPENSIVE ONE.
I can't afford a return gift...
AND THIS BAG WORKS FOR ME.

WELL, BYE BYE!
I'M NOT TALKING...
...ABOUT ANY BIRTHDAY PRESENT!
That was so about a birthday present.
I'LL GET HIM A BAG FOR HIS BIRTH-DAY!

I'M GOING TO GIVE KAKERU...
...A BAG FOR HIS BIRTHDAY.
SO DON'T GET THAT FOR HIM, OKAY?
I'M... GOING TO GIVE IT TO HIM.
AS YOUR ELDER, I'M TELLING YOU TO STEP DOWN.
YOU'RE NOT A GOOD MATCH FOR KAKERU...
...SO JUST GIVE IT UP
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

NOTHING.
IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE NOTHING TO ME.
LAY OFF OF HER, WILL YOU?
IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE GIVING MY FRIEND A HARD TIME.

...FOR AN UNDER-CLASSMAN.
PRETTY STUCK UP...
EHUH?!
WHO'S THE STUCK UP ONE?
HE GOES OUT WITH ME...
...AND THEN BREAKS UP RIGHT AWAY? I DON'T ACCEPT THAT!
...
BESIDES... IT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS.
KAKERU ALREADY BROKE UP WITH YOU!
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SHOULD GIVE IT UP!

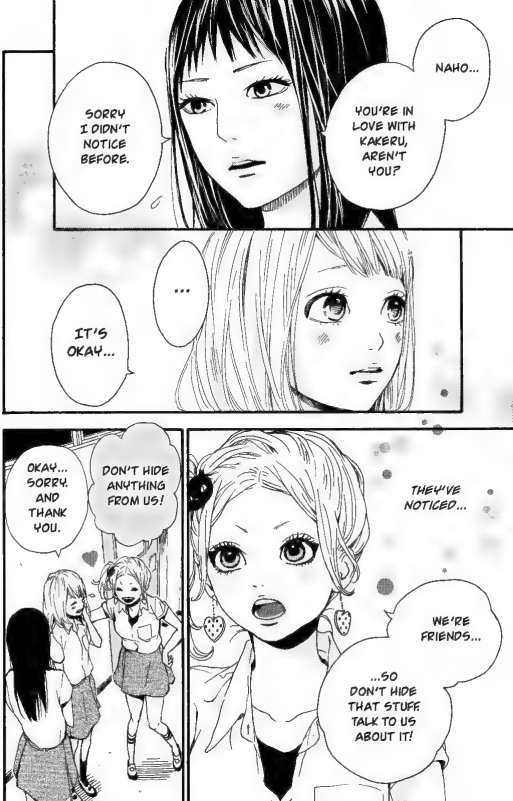
I WANT WORDS WITH THIS GIRL, SO KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT.
SHE'S MY FRIEND, SO IT IS MY BUSINESS.
YOU'RE ANNOYING.
...WHY DON'T YOU FIX YOUR PERSONALITY?
AND IF YOU WANT KAKERU TO GO OUT WITH YOU...
KAKERU...
...HAS A LOT MORE FUN...
...BEING WITH NAHO THAN A JERK LIKE YOU!
EXCUSE ME?
NASTY BITCH, AREN'T YOU?

FWISH
!
THAT'S RIGHT. I'M A NASTY BITCH LIKE YOU...
...SO WHY DON'T I LET THE WHOLE SCHOOL KNOW...
...THAT THEIR MS. AZALEA IS BULLYING AN UNDERCLASS-MAN?

ANYWAY, I CAN FIND ANOTHER GUY JUST LIKE THAT.
PLEASE...
...DON'T DO THAT...
...
...GET LOST.
OR... IF YOU DON'T LIKE THAT IDEA...

WE WON!
GIRLS ARE SCARY.
TH TH TH TH TH
HSTHP

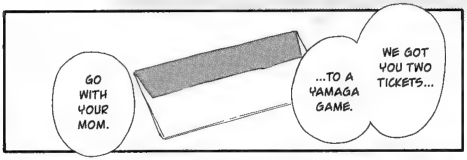
SORRY... I'M GETTING YOU GUYS INVOLVED IN MY PROBLEMS AGAIN...
YEAH, YEAH. FORGET ABOUT IT!
WE DID THIS BECAUSE OUR STRESS HAS BEEN BUILDING UP!
I FEEL TOTALLY REFRESHED!
AND IT'S ALL THANKS TO TAKA-CHAN!
TELL ME IF SHE DOES ANYTHING AGAIN.
I'll hit her.
THANK YOU.
NAHO. COME WITH ME.
?
KAKERU, STAY HERE.
?
I'M SORRY...
...FOR NOT DOING ANYTHING TO STOP KAKERU FROM GOING OUT WITH UEDA-SEMPAI.
IN FACT, WE ENCOURAGED IT...

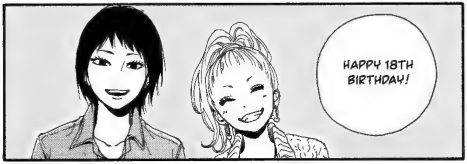

NAHO...
YOU'RE IN LOVE WITH KAKERU, AREN'T YOU?
SORRY I DIDN'T NOTICE BEFORE.
...
IT'S OKAY...
THEY'VE NOTICED...
WE'RE FRIENDS...
...SO DON'T HIDE THAT STUFF TALK TO US ABOUT IT!
DON'T HIDE ANYTHING FROM US!
OKAY... SORRY. AND THANK YOU.

I FIGURED YOU'D SAY THAT.
NO, THAT'S OKAY!
WE'LL HELP YOU!
I...
...HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO DO ANYTHING FOR NAHO.

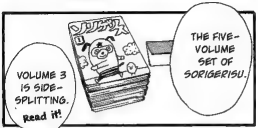
HUH? ARE YOU GOING TO, AS WELL?
WHAT DO YOU THINK I SHOULD DO FOR HER?
ASK HER OUT.
NOT ME.
WHAT THE HECK? THAT'S NOT FAIR.
I MEAN, THERE ISN'T ANYTHING ELSE.
EVERYONE'S ALREADY ASKED ME...
...SO I'M OUT OF IDEAS.
KAKERU...
IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WANT?
NO...

SAID IT.
A SPORTS BAG FOR THE CLUB?
ALREADY SAID THAT ONE.
HOW ABOUT A TICKET TO A YAMAGA MATCH?
I'VE ALREADY THOUGHT...
You think!
THERE MUST BE SOMETHING.
THINK, KAKERU.
YEAH.
SURE.
...FLOWERS? YOU SURE?
YOU CAN GET ME FLOWERS OR SOMETHING.
OKAY. GOT IT.


GO WITH YOUR MOM.
...TO A YAMAGA GAME.
WE GOT YOU TWO TICKETS...

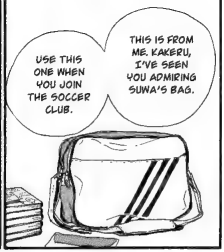

HAPPY 18TH BIRTHDAY!

I've never heard of it.
WHAT IS THAT MANGA?
WANNA BORROW IT?
THAT'S OKAY, sorry.

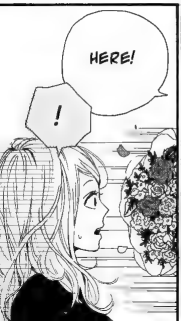

THE FIVE-VOLUME SET OF SORIGERISU.
VOLUME 3 IS SIDE-SPLITTING.
Read it!

HAPPY 18TH.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY.

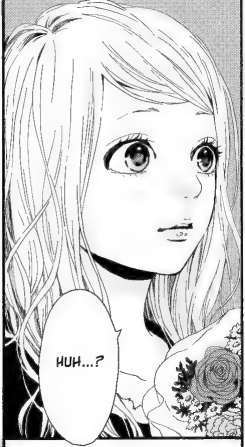

THIS IS FROM ME, KAKERU. I'VE SEEN YOU ADMIRING SUWA'S BAG.
USE THIS ONE WHEN YOU JOIN THE SOCCER CLUB.

I AM EMBARRASSED, BUT THIS IS WHAT KAKERU TOLD ME HE WANTED
HUH?
He did not!
HEY, SUWA, HURRY UP WITH YOURS.
I BET YOU'RE FEELING EMBARRASSED ABOUT IT NOW, AREN'T YOU?
Flowers...


HERE!
!

GRAB
?!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY.
THANK YOU!



"OKAY, GOT IT.

YOU CAN GET ME FLOWERS OR SOMETHING."

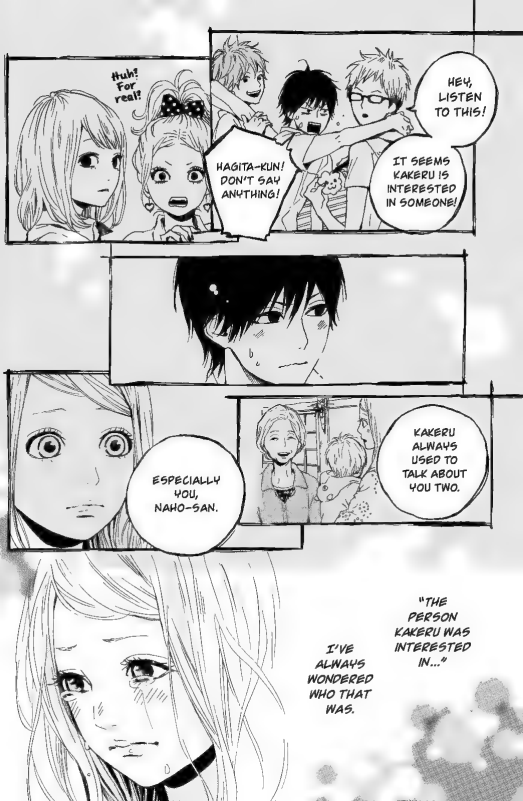
"...FLOWERS? YOU SURE?"

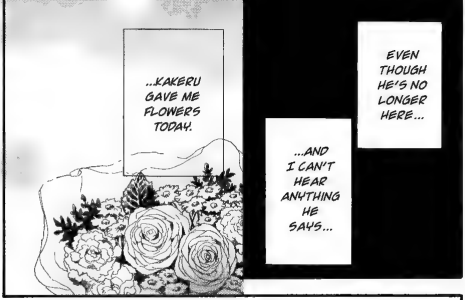
"YEAH. SURE."

"IF I GET 'EM...
...I'LL GIVE 'EM RIGHT TO NAHO."
"HUH?"
"I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT A PRESENT FOR YOU!"
Ha ha ha!
"I'M KIDDING."
THAT'S WHAT HE SAID.
BUT...
WHY ME...?
WHY...?
JEEZ, FIGURE IT OUT ALREADY!
MONSTER
SCHATTEN
MONSTER

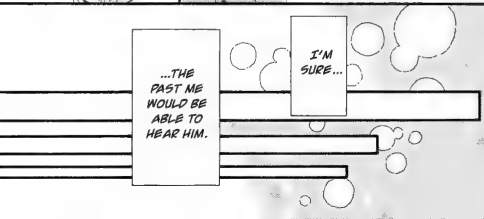
I FIGURED IT OUT FROM THE VERY BEGINNING.
The meaning of the flowers.
KAKERU ALWAYS THOUGHT ABOUT YOU, NAHO.
IT'S OBVIOUS WHAT THE FLOWERS MEANT.
KAKERU... GAVE ME FLOWERS...?
WHY?
I'M SORRY.
WE SHOULD HAVE HELPED HIM MORE WHEN HE WAS ALIVE.
...BUT WE THOUGHT TELLING YOU WOULD ONLY MAKE IT HARDER ON YOU.
NAHO, WE ALL KNEW HOW KAKERU FELT...

KAKERU...
...WAS ALWAYS IN LOVE WITH YOU, NAHO.


Huh! For real?
HAGITA-KUN! DON'T SAY ANYTHING!
IT SEEMS KAKERU IS INTERESTED IN SOMEONE!
HEY, LISTEN TO THIS!
KAKERU ALWAYS USED TO TALK ABOUT YOU TWO.
ESPECIALLY YOU, NAHO-SAN.
"THE PERSON KAKERU WAS INTERESTED IN..."
I'VE ALWAYS WONDERED WHO THAT WAS.


...KAKERU GAVE ME FLOWERS TODAY.
EVEN THOUGH HE'S NO LONGER HERE...
...AND I CAN'T HEAR ANYTHING HE SAYS...

KAKERU...
IF HE WERE HERE NOW, I WONDER WHAT HE WOULD SAY.


...THE PAST ME WOULD BE ABLE TO HEAR HIM.
I'M SURE...

HAPPY BIRTHDAY
HAPPY 17TH BIRTHDAY!
KAKERU!
THANK YOU!
THE MANGA? THANK YOU!
HERE'S MY PRESENT. DON'T BE SURPRISED
HOW DID YOU KNOW?
Jun's mom told me in advance! ;)
THE SOCCER TICKET? THANK YOU!
OPEN YOUR PRESENT FROM US!

WOW! IT'S SO COOL!
adidas
BUT I WANTED TO GIVE THIS TO YOU.
I KNOW.
NAHO... I SAID I DIDN'T NEED AN EXPENSIVE ONE.
That's huge!
I'M SORRY.
THAT MUST'VE BEEN EXPENSIVE... BUT I'M THRILLED.
I'LL TAKE GOOD CARE OF IT.
I'M SO GLAD.
I'M THRILLED, TOO.
GOOD.
THANK YOU.

TA-DA
バサッ
!
I'LL GO GET IT. IT'S IN THE HALLWAY.
?
SO WHERE'S YOUR PRESENT, SUWA?
Hurry it up.
Us, too!
HA HA HA
ギャハハ
WHAT'S THAT?
PFFF!
FLOWERS?! WHAT ARE YOU, HIS BOY-FRIEND?
...
SHUT UP! STOP LAUGHIN'!
KAKERU SAID THIS IS WHAT HE WANTED!
KAKERU SAID?
HEY! I TOLD YOU, I WAS ONLY KIDDING!
DON'T REALLY BRING ME FLOWERS, YOU IDIOT!

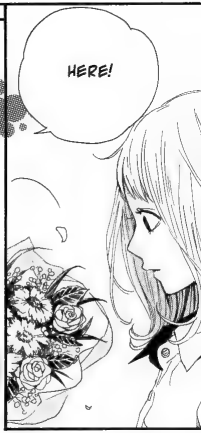
SEPTEMBER 14TH.
THIS IS KAKERU'S BIRTHDAY.

BEFORE THIS DAY COMES, I WANT YOU TO PESTER HIM ABOUT HIS BIRTH DATE AND ASK WHAT HE WANTS FOR HIS BIRTHDAY.

ALSO, WHEN I

ASK HIM ABOUT A PRESENT, PLEASE MAKE SURE IT'S AFTER EVERYONE ELSE HAS ASKED HIM. I'M PRETTY SURE KAKERU WILL SAY "FLOWERS." ASK HIM THE REASON WHY.

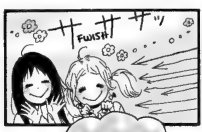
MAKE SURE YOU GIVE HIM A BOUQUET OF FLOWERS. DEFINITELY.



WHY...
...ME?
HUH...?
WHY...?
WHY...?

Grab

BECAUSE I WANNA GIVE 'EM TO YOU!


FWISH!

GO AHEAD, DON'T MIND US!
...
No meaning.

WHY...?
WHY ME?
BECAUSE HE WANTS TO GIVE THEM TO ME?

AT THE FESTIVAL...
...I SAID THAT AMONG YOU THREE GIRLS...
...I WOULD CONFESS MY LOVE TO YOU, NAHO.
BUT REALLY, NO MATTER HOW MANY OTHER GIRLS THERE ARE...
...MY ANSWER WOULD STILL BE YOU.

I'M SORRY I DIDN'T BUY THOSE FLOWERS MYSELF...
...BUT...
...I HOPE YOU REALIZE...
...HOW I FEEL ABOUT YOU.

BACK THEN, FOR SOME REASON...
...I DIDN'T DO A GOOD JOB OF SUPPORTING KAKERU AND NAHO.
BUT AFTER KAKERU PASSED AWAY AND NAHO BECAME A SOBBING WRECK...
...I FELT HUGE REGRET. I WONDERED WHY I HADN'T DONE A BETTER JOB OF LOOKING AFTER THE TWO OF THEM.

SO I WANT YOU, MY PAST SELF,
TO CAREFULLY WATCH OVER THEM.

I KNOW IT MAY BE A LITTLE SAD FOR YOU TO STAND BY AND JUST GUARD THE GIRL THAT YOU LOVE...

...BUT YOU'LL ALWAYS HAVE SOCCER. KEEP SOCCER AS YOUR LIFELONG LOVE.

PLEASE, SEE TO IT THAT KAKERU AND NAHO...

...REALIZE EACH OTHER'S FEELINGS.
"I HOPE YOU REALIZE..."

...SO THAT KAKERU AND NAHO CAN LAUGH TOGETHER TEN YEARS IN THE FUTURE.

I'M LEAVING THOSE TWO IN YOUR HANDS.

The next chapter is scheduled to be in the April issue (on sale Tuesday, February 25, 2014).

I HOPE YOU REALIZE...
...HOW I FEEL ABOUT YOU.
I...

EPISODE 10

...SHARED HIS FEELINGS WITH ME.
KAKERU...

YOU DON'T...
...HAVE TO ANSWER!
I JUST WANTED TO TELL YOU HOW I FELT...
AN ANSWER...
OKAY...

I FEEL...
HOT...
I STILL DON'T BELIEVE IT...
MY ANSWER IS OBVIOUS.
...THE SAME WAY ABOUT HIM.
MORNIN'!

MY PRESENT...
AH...
AH!
THANKS FOR USING THE BAG!

YOU'RE NOT GONNA ANSWER HIM?
EXACTLY THE SAME.
HUH?
??
HEY, GET OUTTA HERE!
AREN'T YOU GONNA ANSWER HIM?
SO?
I CAME TO HELP.
IF YOU'VE COME TO GET IN THE WAY, GO HOME!
PING PONG

IF I ANSWER HIM...
...MAYBE IT WOULD BOTHER HIM...
HA HA HA
THAT'S JUST LIKE YOU, NAHO!
AFTER ALL, I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY...
JUST TELL HIM EXACTLY HOW YOU FEEL!
EXACTLY? ? ?
PFFT
Huh?
Ew
NAHO...
JUST MAKE SURE...
...YOU DO ANSWER HIM.
CUT IT OUT.

NAHO, REALLY, YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT IT.
DON'T BULLY HER.
FAP
I'LL BE HAPPY IF YOU TREAT ME LIKE YOU'VE ALWAYS TREATED ME.
WOW! TALK ABOUT PUTTING UP A FRONT...
SHUT UP, AZU.
I WONDER...
...WHAT THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT?
WELL, I'LL CARRY THIS.
LET'S GO, SUWA.
YEAH, YEAH.
PING PONG

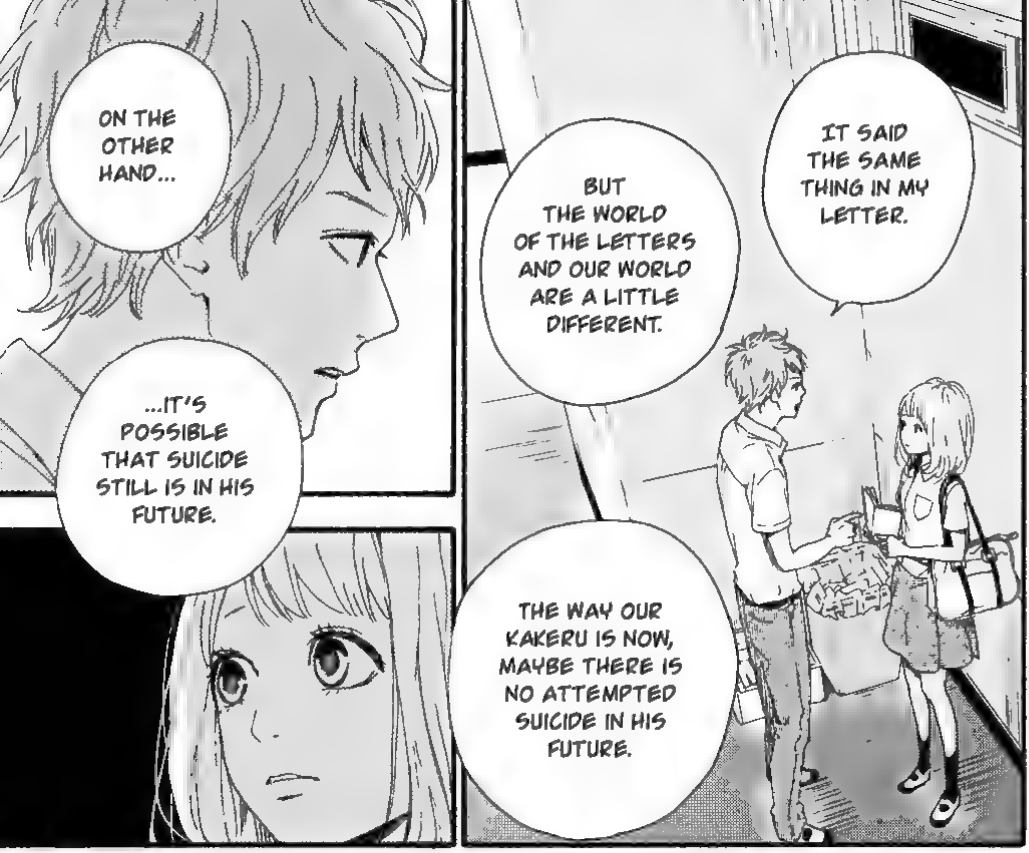
NAHO!
!
KAKERU SAID...
?
...THAT HAIRSTYLE IS CUTE!
WH... WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
I DIDN'T SAY THAT!
HUH? YES, YOU DID. I HEARD YOU.
HAGITA-KUN! WHERE'D YOU COME FROM?

CHIRP ミーン CHIRP
CHIRP ミンミン
CHIRP ミーン
I WONDER WHAT KAKERU WOULD THINK...
...IF I DID TELL HIM HOW I FELT...
SUWA, LET'S GO TO THE CLUB.
SORRY.
YOU GO ON AHEAD. I'LL BE THERE SOON.
?
OKAY. THEN I'LL SEE YOU THERE.
YEP.

NAHO!
CAN I TALK TO YOU FOR A SEC?
HUH?
LISTEN...
I DON'T KNOW IF IT'S IN YOUR LETTER TOO, BUT HAVE YOU GOT ANYTHING FOR THE 23RD?
YOU MEAN SEPTEMBER 23RD?
YEAH.
LET ME SEE...
SORRY 'BOUT THIS...
IT'S OKAY.
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
THERE IS SOMETHING.
September 23rd

SEPTEMBER 23RD

THIS IS WHAT I HEARD FROM KAKERU'S GRANDMOTHER AFTER HE DIED:
KAKERU ATTEMPTED SUICIDE ON THIS DAY.
SHE SAID HE HANGED HIMSELF WITH A TOWEL IN HIS BEDROOM AND WAS TAKEN TO THE HOSPITAL UNCONSCIOUS.
KAKERU WAS ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR SEVERAL DAYS, STARTING ON THE 24TH. THE REASON WAS THAT HE WAS HOSPITALIZED.


ON THE OTHER HAND...
...IT'S POSSIBLE THAT SUICIDE STILL IS IN HIS FUTURE.
BUT THE WORLD OF THE LETTERS AND OUR WORLD ARE A LITTLE DIFFERENT.
IT SAID THE SAME THING IN MY LETTER.
THE WAY OUR KAKERU IS NOW, MAYBE THERE IS NO ATTEMPTED SUICIDE IN HIS FUTURE.

IT'S OKAY. I'LL DO SOMETHING.
NAHO...
KAKERU...
I HAVE TO DO SOMETHING, AND FAST...
KAKERU...
WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

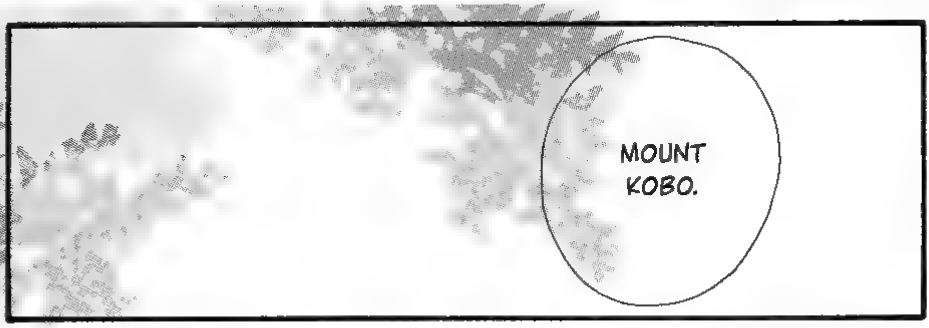
THE DAY BEFORE, KAKERU MET A FRIEND FROM HIS OLD SCHOOL.

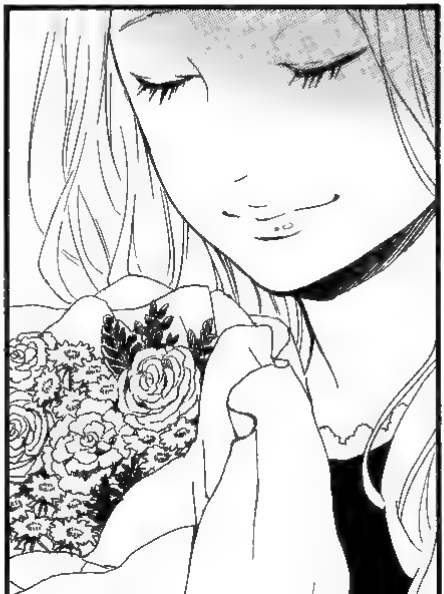
HE TOLD THE FRIEND ABOUT HIS MOTHER'S SUICIDE AND THAT HE WANTED TO DIE TOO, APPARENTLY.

BUT THE FRIEND THOUGHT HE WAS ONLY JOKING AND LAUGHED AT HIM.

I WANT YOU TWO TO TALK TO HIM ABOUT HIS FEELINGS.

NOT AT ALL. THANK YOU FOR COMING ALL THIS WAY...
...AND GIVING ME SUCH A PLEASANT AFTERNOON.
WELL, WE HAVE TO MAKE ANOTHER STOP...
...SO THANK YOU FOR YOUR HOSPITALITY.





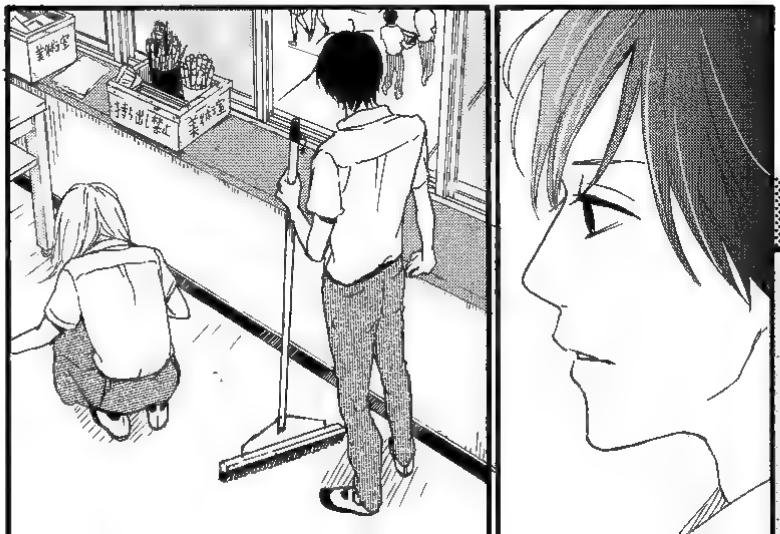
IT WAS THE DAY BEFORE HE DIED.

THERE WAS A POINT WHEN I WAS ON THE VERGE OF TELLING KAKERU HOW I FELT ABOUT HIM.

YEAH...
AH!
IS THAT VALENTINE'S DAY CHOCOLATE?
YOU GONNA GIVE IT TO HIM RIGHT?
YEAH...
HUH...
IS A GUY THAT YOU LIKE?
OH
I SEE...

THAT'LL BE ALL FOR TODAY.
BYE, NAHO

DON'T FORGET TO GIVE YOUR CHOCOLATE TO THAT GUY.
I COULDN'T GIVE IT TO HIM.
JUST LIKE I WASN'T ABLE TO GIVE HIM THE LUNCH I'D MADE...
I KNEW THAT NO MATTER HOW MANY CHANCES I WAS GIVEN, I JUST WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO DO IT.
I COULDN'T DO IT...


...BECAUSE I WAS WORRIED ABOUT WHAT KAKERU WOULD THINK OF ME.

WHOOSH...
? WHAT'S THE "WHOOSH" FOR?
OH...
I WAS THINKING THAT AFTER THIS, MAYBE I'LL JUMP OUT THAT WINDOW AND FLY AWAY...
...LIKE SUPER-MAN.
...

BUT YOU CAN'T FLY, KAKERU.
HA HA
YOU TAKE EVERYTHING SO SERIOUSLY, NAHO! I'M TALKING DAY-DREAMS!

IF I WERE SUPERMAN...
...MAYBE I WOULD'VE BEEN ABLE TO SAVE MY MOTHER.

...IS ACTING A LITTLE WEIRD RIGHT NOW.
I'M KIDDING.
OH, YEAH.
KAKERU...
NO...
NEXT SATURDAY, I'M MEETING A FRIEND FROM TOKYO.
WHY NOT?
HUH?
DON'T!
...WHY NOT...?
ALTHOUGH IT'S JUST A GUY...
...NO!

HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO ANSWER THAT?
DON'T MEET HIM.

HUH? WHAT THE HELL? YOU TOO, SUWA?
HANG OUT WITH US INSTEAD.
WHAT THE...?
WHY DON'T YOU TALK TO US?
ESPECIALLY NOW, WHEN YOU GOT SOMETHIN' WEIGHING ON YOUR MIND...

HOW DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THAT?
YOU HEARD FROM NAHO?
YEAH, SOMETHIN' LIKE THAT.
I'M TALKING ABOUT YOUR MOTHER.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
IT'S EXACTLY BECAUSE WE'RE CLOSE FRIENDS THAT YOU SHOULD TALK TO US!
I CONSIDER YOU GUYS CLOSE FRIENDS, SO WHEN WE'RE TOGETHER, I WANNA LAUGH.
WELL, THERE'S NO WAY...
...I CAN TALK TO YOU GUYS ABOUT THAT.

WE DON'T WANNA LAUGH WHILE BEING IGNORANT ABOUT WHAT YOU'RE GOIN' THROUGH, KAKERU.
I'M POSITIVE THAT WE CAN HELP YOU.
IF THINGS ARE ROUGH, SAY SO!
HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT...
...THAT YOU WANTED TO DIE?

YEAH...
...I HAVE.
EVERY SINGLE DAY.
WHY...
...DO YOU THINK THAT?
IT'S ALL MY FAULT...
BECAUSE I BROKE THE PROMISE I MADE TO MY MOTHER ON THE DAY OF THE OPENING CEREMONY.

"I KNEW THAT SHE REALLY NEEDED MY SUPPORT."
"I'M A TERRIBLE SON..."
...MY MOTHER DIED. IT'S MY FAULT.
BECAUSE I THOUGHT IT WAS "A PAIN"...
I COULDN'T SAY ANYTHING TO COMFORT HIM THEN.
WHY COULDN'T I HAVE SAID ANYTHING MORE TO PUT HIS MIND AT EASE?
IF I'D BEEN ABLE TO SAY SOMETHING TO HIM THEN...
BUT WHAT SHOULD I HAVE SAID?

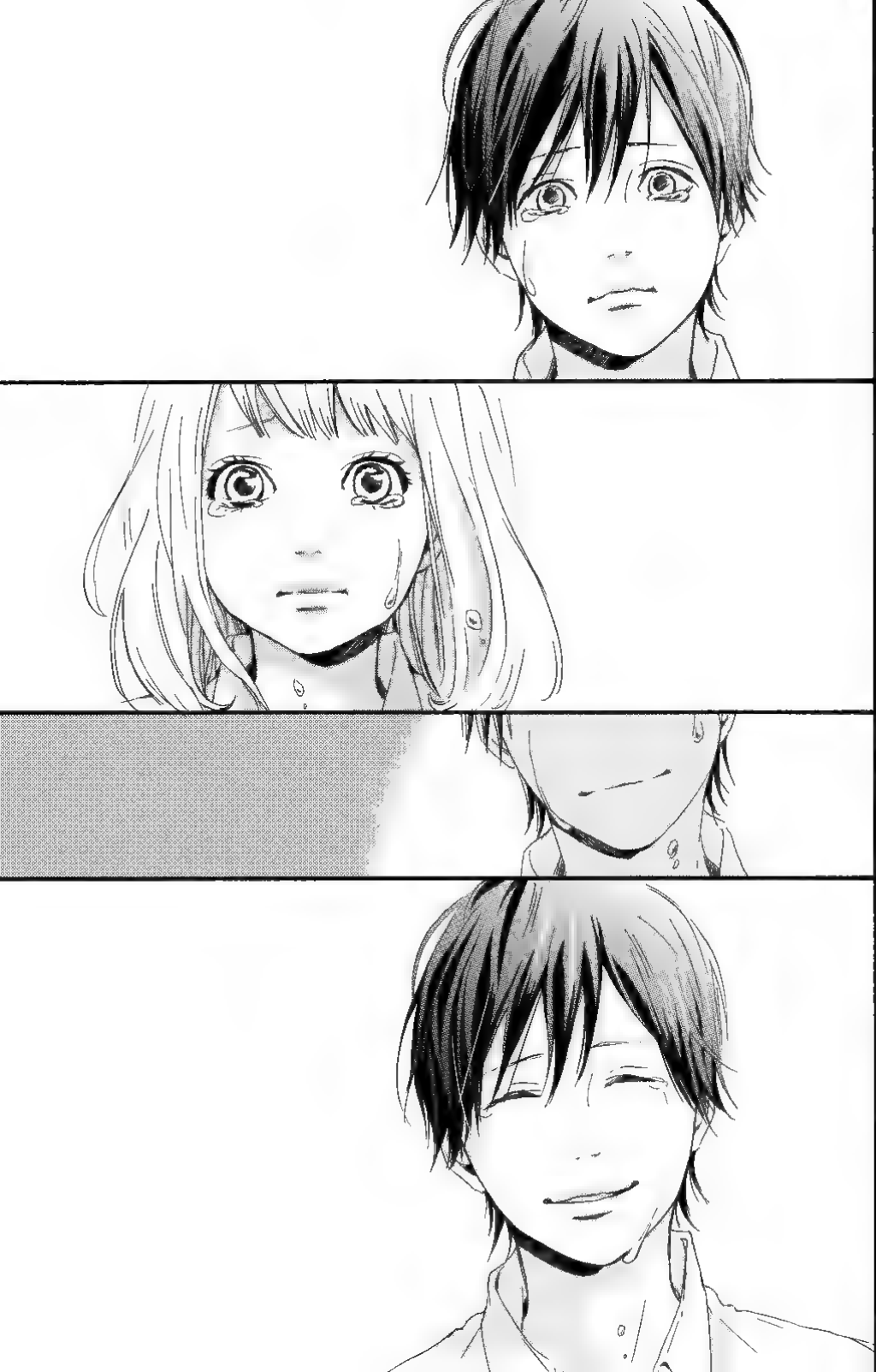
MY MOM HASSLES ME EVERY DAY.
I GET NAGGED TO STUDY, TO CLEAN MY ROOM...
"WHAT A PAIN" GOES THROUGH MY HEAD EVERY SINGLE DAY!
THAT'S ONLY NATURAL, KAKERU.
EVERYBODY THINKS STUFF LIKE THAT...
...IS "A PAIN."

I...
BUT...
...IT'S DIFFERENT!
STOP FEELING REGRET.
YOU DIDN'T DO ANYTHING WRONG.

IT'S NOT ABOUT "WHAT WILL KAKERU THINK OF ME?"
I WANT HIM TO KNOW THAT HE'S NEEDED.
I JUST WANT HIM TO KNOW...
...HOW I FEEL.

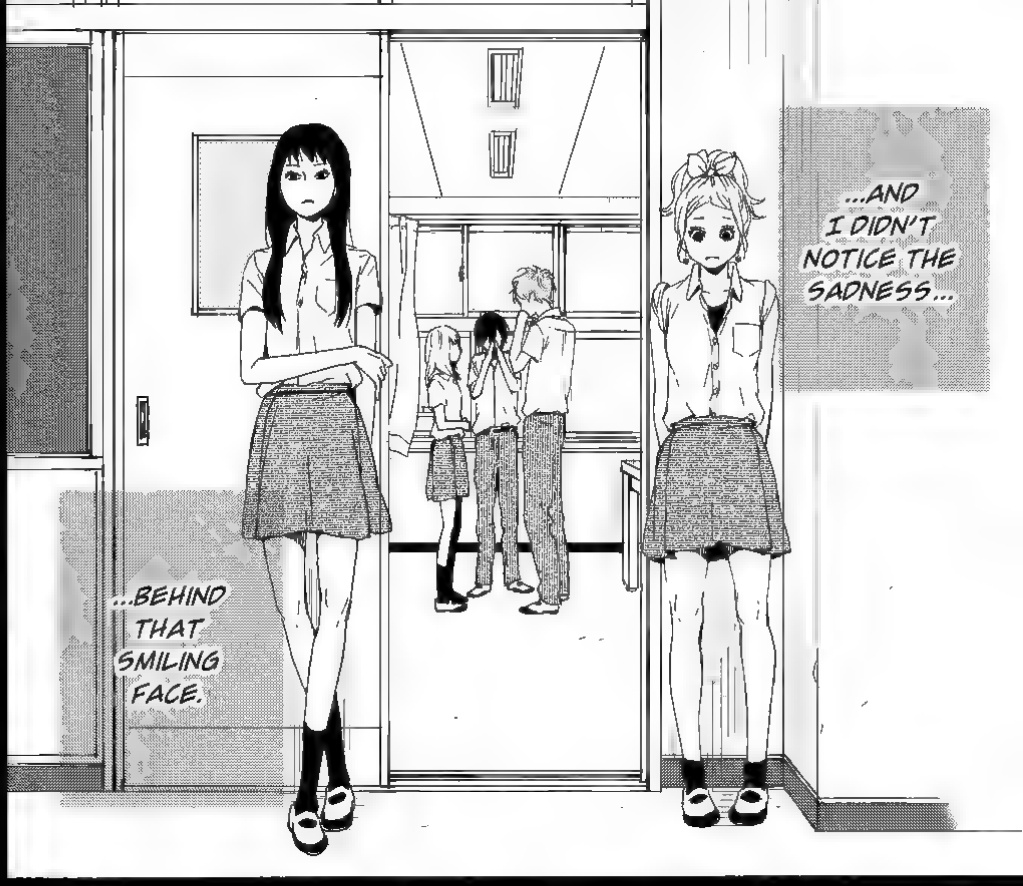
I DON'T...
...WANT TO LOSE YOU.
KAKERU...
DON'T DIE.
I FEEL...
...THE SAME WAY ABOUT YOU.

I LOVE YOU.
I LOVE YOU...
...SO WHATEVER YOU DO, DON'T GO AWAY!



I SAID...
...YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO ANSWER ME.
THANK YOU.
SUWA, ARE YOU CRYING?
OF COURSE NOT!
I have hay fever!

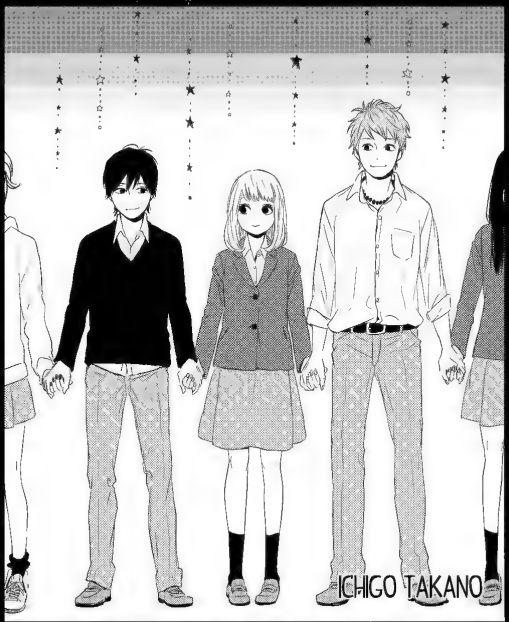
...IS ALWAYS SMILING.
KAKERU...
EVEN WHEN HE'S SAD...
...HE SMILES LIKE ALWAYS.
BUT WHAT DOES "ALWAYS" MEAN?
HE'S SMILED LIKE THAT SINCE I FIRST MET HIM...



...FOR REAL.

...I WANT TO SEE KAKERU SMILE...

SOMEDAY...


ICHIGO TAKANO

EVERYTHING I'VE DONE UP TO NOW...
...EVEN IF IT'S LITTLE BY LITTLE...
...HAS LED TO A BRIGHT FUTURE, I HOPE.
CHFF
KAKERU!
HOW LONG ARE YOU GONNA PRACTICE OUT HERE? GET CHANGED!
HUFF
HUFF

HUFF HUFF
WHAT ARE YOU LISTENING TO, KAKERU?
YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW IT, HAGITA-KUN.
COME ON! I'LL KNOW IT!
WHAT SHOULD I DO? I CAN'T LOOK KAKERU IN THE FACE.

I FEEL SO...
...SELF-CONSCIOUS ABOUT YESTERDAY.
CHUSU
LET ME LISTEN TO IT A SEC.
WHY?
GLANCE
Huh?
WHY NOT? COME ON!
GIVE IT TO ME!
Ah!
That hurt!
THUMP

...
WANNA LISTEN?
HM.
?!
ALL THIS TIME...
...I'VE BEEN HESITATING OVER HOW TO SAY SOMETHING TO HIM.
OUR EYES MEET AT LAST.

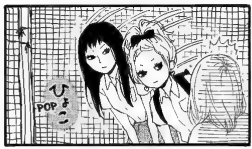
I BET...
...KAKERU NOTICED THAT, TOO.
OH, GOOD!
I SEE.
ON THE 22ND...
...I CANCELLED PLANS TO MEET MY TOKYO FRIEND.
HUH?
I MADE PLANS WITH SUWA INSTEAD.
IT'S MORE FUN HANGING OUT WITH HIM.

I'M SURE I WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SAY THAT IF THE LETTER HADN'T COME.
"I LOVE YOU."

Ha ha ha!
PFFT
CUT THAT OUT!
LET ME LISTEN!

I'VE BEEN ABLE TO CHANGE, THANKS TO THAT LETTER.
It's fun? Then that makes it all right... NOT!
Yeah, it's fun. Sorry!
Kakeru loves being mean to Nagita.

EVEN THOUGH I COULDN'T EVEN...
...VOICE MY OPINIONS BEFORE...
...NOW I CAN EXPRESS MY FEELINGS.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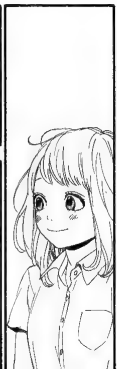


IS THERE SOMETHING YOU'RE HIDING FROM US?

...BUT YESTERDAY, I TOLD KAKERU HOW I FEEL ABOUT HIM.
IT'S... IT'S NOT LIKE I WAS HIDING IT...
HUH?
HIDING?!
DO THEY MEAN WHAT HAPPENED YESTERDAY?!
Did they hear from Kakeru or Suwa?
GRIN
BUT... WE DIDN'T SAY WE WERE DATING...
BOYFRIEND?
CONGRATULATIONS! YOUR FIRST BOYFRIEND!
NOTHING TO BE PROUD ABOUT! I WAS NERVOUS, AND MY VOICE WAS SHAKY...
THAT'S FANTASTIC, NAHO! I'M PROUD OF YOU!!

IS THERE...
SO?
ANYTHING ELSE?
...ANYTHING ELSE YOU'RE KEEPING FROM US?

ANYTHING ELSE I'M HIDING...?
ANYTHING ELSE?
KAKERU!!

NARUSE!
ARE YOU OKAY?!

Infirmary
YOU SCARED ME!!
I MEAN, KAKERU, YOU FAINTED!
SORRY, GUYS.
IT'S FINE...
...BUT ARE YOU OKAY?
YEAH.
I JUST GOT A LITTLE DIZZY.
THAT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE A WEAKLING!
I AM NOT!

ARE YOU...
...EATING RIGHT THESE DAYS?
YEAH, THOUGH NOT AS MUCH AS YOU...
ha ha ha!
...
SUWA IS A GLUTTON!
#A #A #A
BUT SERIOUSLY, YOU NEED TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF
YOU DON'T WANT YOUR GIRLFRIEND TO LAUGH AT YOU, DO YOU?
...
MY GIRLFRIEND?
NAHO, SILLY!
NAHO!

SHE'S NOT MY GIRLFRIEND.
WE DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT GOING OUT YET, DID WE?
HUH?! WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
IF TWO PEOPLE LOVE EACH OTHER, IT ONLY MAKES SENSE TO DATE!
EH? TAKAMIYA, ARE YOU IN LOVE WITH KAKEHI, TOO?
YOU KNOW THAT'S NOT WHAT SHE'S SAYING, SO SHUT UP.
IT DOESN'T FEEL LIKE IT'S A SIMPLE MATTER TO ME.
I MEAN, IF NAHO AND I WERE GOING OUT, I'D PROBABLY HURT HER SOMEHOW.
SO GIVEN THAT, IF WE CAN BE HAPPY AND HAVE A GOOD TIME WITHOUT DATING, I'D JUST AS SOON GO WITH THAT.

YEAH.
...LOVE YOU.
BECAUSE I REALLY DO...
WELL, DUH.
...A LOT MORE THAN YOU DID WITH UEDA-SEMPAI.
THEN YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT NAHO'S FEELINGS...
I THINK I KNOW HOW KAKERU FEELS.
NARUSE-KUN, YOUR GRANDMOTHER IS HERE TO PICK YOU UP.
IF KAKERU AND I START DATING, THE FUTURE MAY CHANGE SIGNIFICANTLY.
IT MAY EVEN THROW WHAT'S WRITTEN IN THE LETTER OFF COURSE SO MUCH, I WON'T BE ABLE TO SAVE KAKERU.
THAT'S WHAT I'M SCARED OF.

?
SORRY FOR WHAT?

SO I WAS SLIGHTLY RELIEVED BY KAKERU'S ANSWER.
SORRY...
...NAHO.

...TO GIVE YOU TWO A SUPPORTIVE PUSH SO THINGS TURN OUT WELL FOR YOU.
IT SAID IN MY LETTER...

OH, THAT.
NO, I'M FINE.

FOR NOT BEING ABLE TO TELL KAKERU TO GO OUT WITH YOU.

I WONDER IF THE INSTRUCTIONS IN THE LETTER FROM MY FUTURE SELF ARE CORRECT.
BUT I COULDN'T DO IT.

...ABOUT KAKERU COLLAPSING TODAY?
DID YOUR LETTER SAY ANYTHING...
...
UH UH...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
THEN THAT'S A NEW FUTURE THAT WAS BORN...
...ONLY IN OUR WORLD.

HUH?
...IT STARTED WHEN HE JOINED THE SOCCER CLUB.
I THINK...
BUT HE WANTS TO BE CHOSEN TO PLAY, SO EVERY DAY, HE WORKS TWICE AS HARD AS ANYONE ELSE.
HE'S STILL A NEWBIE IN THE CLUB, SO HE HASN'T BEEN ABLE TO PLAY IN ANY MATCHES YET.
...IT MAKES ME WONDER...
...IF I WAS RIGHT TO INVITE HIM TO JOIN IN THE FIRST PLACE.
HE'S PROBABLY WORN HIMSELF OUT THAT WAY.
HE HASN'T BEEN LOOKING TOO WELL LATELY, EITHER.
IF THE CLUB IS BECOMING A BURDEN ON KAKERU...

I CAN TELL KAKERU LOVES BEING PART OF THE CLUB.
OF COURSE YOU WERE.
JUST BECAUSE HIS FAINTING WASN'T IN THE LETTER DOESN'T MEAN IT'S THE CLUB'S FAULT.
RIGHT NOW, I KIND OF UNDERSTAND WHY SUWA'S AFRAID...
...TO MAKE A CHOICE.
YEAH...
BUT EVEN IF THE FUTURE CAN BE CHANGED BECAUSE OF THE LETTER, WE DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN...
...AND THAT'S MAKIN' ME A LITTLE NERVOUS.

...BECAUSE I DIDN'T WANT TO HAVE ANY MORE REGRETS.

...MADE ME THINK I HAD TO DO EVERYTHING I COULD TO FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS IN THE LETTER...

NOT BEING ABLE TO SAVE KAKERU ON THE DAY OF THE OPENING CEREMONY...

"I WONDER IF THE INSTRUCTIONS IN THE LETTER FROM MY FUTURE SELF ARE CORRECT."

I NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT IT BEFORE...

...BUT I KNOW IT'S NOT MISTAKEN.

THAT LETTER HAS HELPED ME OUT TIME AND TIME AGAIN.

TWEEET

OCTOBER 1ST
DURING PE, EVERYONE'S TIMES ARE RECORDED IN THE 100-METER DASH.
KAKERU IS CHOSEN TO RUN THE RELAY AT THE ATHLETIC FESTIVAL.

SIX BOYS AND GIRLS FROM OUR CLASS ARE GOING TO DO IT.
KAKERU IS THE FASTEST RUNNER, SO HE'S GOING TO BE THE ANCHOR.

BUT ON THE DAY OF THE FESTIVAL, DURING THE RELAY, KAKERU IS RUNNING IN THE LEAD WHEN HE SUDDENLY TWISTS HIS ANKLE AND FALLS. AS A RESULT, THE CLASS COMES IN LAST.

KAKERU FEELS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE LOSS.

HE WAS ANXIOUS ABOUT BEING CHOSEN FOR THE EVENT. HE SHOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN PUT UNDER THAT MUCH PRESSURE.

IT SEEMS HE PUT HIMSELF IN THE SHOES OF AZU, WHO STRUCK OUT, LOSING THE BASEBALL GAME AT THE SPRING BALL GAME TOURNAMENT.

FOR KAKERU'S SAKE, DO SOMETHING SO HE'S NO LONGER A MEMBER OF THE RELAY TEAM.

KAKERU!
HOW ABOUT I RUN IN YOUR PLACE?
HUH?
YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO IT IF YOU DON'T WANT TO.
TH-THAT'S RIGHT!
IT'S OKAY TO DROP OUT!
IF IT'S TOO MUCH PRESSURE...
WANT ME TO TALK TO THE TEACHER FOR YOU?
...
NO, IT'S FINE.
I'M ACTUALLY KIND OF LOOKING FORWARD TO IT.
LOOKING FORWARD TO IT?

SO I WANNA GIVE BEING ANCHOR A TRY.
IT MAKES ME THINK I CAN BE USEFUL SOMETIMES!
...
I'M HAPPY TO BE PICKED.
YOU REALLY WANNA DO IT, FROM THE BOTTOM OF YOUR HEART?
WAIT... ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THIS?
WHAT THE HECK?
KAKERU'S FEELINGS HAVE CHANGED...
IT'S BECAUSE I CHANGED THE FUTURE AT THE BALL GAME TOURNAMENT.
KAKERU SAYS HE WANTS TO DO IT, SO JUST LET HIM DO IT.

I'M WORRIED ABOUT YOU. IF SOMETHING WERE TO HAPPEN...
IT'S JUST THAT YOU COLLAPSED THE OTHER DAY, KAKERU.

NO... IT'S NOT LIKE I DON'T WANT HIM TO DO IT...
UNLESS YOU'VE GOT A REASON FOR NOT WANTING HIM TO DO IT?

...I SHOULDN'T DO IT AFTER ALL.
MAYBE...

WELL, I SEE WHAT YOU MEAN...
...BUT KAKERU WANTS TO DO IT.
I KNOW, BUT...
HEY, YOU'RE GONNA BE LATE TO CLASS!
SHUT UP, HAGITA!

...I WOULD RUIN IT FOR EVERYONE.
IF I FELL IN THE MIDDLE OF THE RELAY...

YEAH.
ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THIS, KAKERU?
THANK YOU.
Y-YEAH, SURE.
SUWA, WILL YOU RUN FOR ME?
...HE MUST'VE BEEN HAPPY TO BE CHOSEN.
AFTER NOT BEING ABLE TO PLAY IN MATCHES FOR THE CLUB...
WELL, WE DIDN'T EXPECT KAKERU TO SAY HE WANTED TO DO IT.
...I WAS WRONG TO DO THAT.
I THINK...

BUT I THINK I FELL A LITTLE SHORT OF THAT WISH THIS TIME.

THE FUTURE IS CHANGING NOW...

...SO THERE MAY BE THINGS REQUESTED OF ME IN THE LETTER THAT I CAN'T FULFILL.

SUWA!
WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO WHEN THAT TIME COMES?
COME HERE A SECOND.
?
IS THERE SOMETHING YOU'RE HIDING FROM US?
??
WHERE'S NAHO?
WHAT?

ABOUT KAKERU!
SENSEI!
WHAT IS IT, NARUSE?
I'D LIKE TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT THE RELAY AT THE ATHLETIC FESTIVAL.

SENSEI!
...YEAH.
WHAT?
YOU DON'T WANNA BE THE ANCHOR?
TAKA-CHAN?
WHAT IS IT, CHINO?

I WANT TO BE IN THE RELAY.
YOU WANT TO DO IT?
WHAT IS THIS?
SENSEI, ME TOO!
I WANNA RUN IN THE RELAY!
SWISH

THE THING IS...
...I'VE ALREADY CHOSEN THE RUNNERS.
REPRESENTING THE CLASS IS KIND OF A HEAVY RESPONSIBILITY, SO...
...IF POSSIBLE, I'D LIKE TO LET ONE OF THEM TO RUN IN MY PLACE.
UM...
ACTUALLY, WE TALKED ABOUT IT, AND I MADE A DECISION.
I FEEL...
...THE SAME WAY.
WHAT IS THIS SUDDEN URGE TO BE IN THE RELAY?
WELL, IT'S THE FIRST ATHLETIC FESTIVAL SINCE KAKERU STARTED HERE...
...SO I THOUGHT IT'D BE FUN TO DO IT TOGETHER.

WE WANT TO RUN WITH KAKERU.

I'LL TAKE HIS PLACE.
WHAT?! IT'S NO FAIR IF ONLY THE GIRLS GET TO SWITCH!
I WANT SOMEBODY TO TAKE MY PLACE!
Me, too!
NOW SEE WHAT YOU'VE STARTED?!

EVERYTHING I DO...

...DOESN'T HAVE TO BASED ON FOLLOWING THAT LETTER.

EVEN THE FUTURE ME DOESN'T KNOW WHAT THE RESULTS WILL BE.

THERE'S NO NEED TO GET CAUGHT UP IN THAT KIND OF DOUBT.

RATTLE
I...
I...
MY VOICE...

...IS SHAKING.
I WANT TO RUN...
...WITH KAKERU.
HEY.
HAGITA.
...

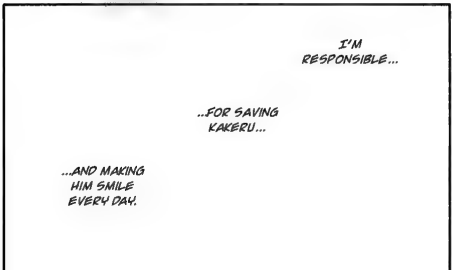
HAGITA...
...
HA-GI-TA!

ガタン
GATAN
ギー
GEEE

IT'S NOT LIKE I'M FAST OR ANYTHING, BUT...
CAN I BE IN IT, TOO?

KAKERU IS THE ANCHOR...
...SO WE'LL PASS THE BATON OFF TO EACH OTHER UNTIL IT GETS TO HIM.

TODAY...
...I CHOSE A PATH THAT DIFFERED FROM THE LETTER.
A DIFFERENT PATH IS FINE...
...AS LONG AS WE MAKE SURE IT LEADS TO A BRIGHT FUTURE.


I'M RESPONSIBLE...
...FOR SAVING KAKERU...
...AND MAKING HIM SMILE EVERY DAY.

ICHIGO TAKANO

THE RELAY RUNNERS FOR THE ATHLETIC FESTIVAL...
...ARE NARUSE, SUWA, HAGITA, CHINO, MURASAKA, AND TAKAMIYA.
HAGITA, CAN YOU ACTUALLY RUN?
OF COURSE NOT...
...YES, YOU CAN! WHEN YOU REALLY HAVE TO DO SOMETHING, YOU PULL OUT ALL THE STOPS!
FORGET IT. I QUIT.
YOU GUYS REALLY ARE CLOSE!
THANKS, SUWA! DO YOUR BEST!
TWANG!
...OUCH...
THANK YOU.

I'M OVERJOYED.
KAKERU SMILED...
...LOOKING FORWARD TO THE RELAY EVEN MORE.
NOW I'M...
I FIGURED YOU'D VOLUNTEER TOO, NAHO.
I HEARD YOU'D BE WILLING TO TAKE MY PLACE.
EH?
ARE YOU SURE? YOU DON'T MIND IF I DO IT?
OF COURSE I DON'T!
NAHO-CHAN! THANK YOU FOR TAKING MY PLACE IN THE RELAY!

WHEN SHE SAID SHE WANTED TO SWITCH WITH SOMEONE...
...WE THOUGHT YOU'D BE UP FOR IT, SO WE VOLUNTEERED YOU!
EH?!
GOOD LUCK, NAHO-CHAN!
DO YOUR BEST!
YOU CAN DO IT!
WE'LL BE ROOTING FOR YOU!
HAVE A GOOD TIME RUNNING TOGETHER!
DON'T BE NERVOUS, NARUSE!

I'M GLAD IT WORKED OUT THIS WAY.

I THINK YOU'RE RIGHT...
THIS TIME, WE MADE A DIFFERENT CHOICE THAN WHAT THE LETTERS SUGGESTED...
...BUT IF THE RESULT LEADS TO SAVING KAKERU, THEN IT'S ALL TO THE GOOD.
I'M HAPPY...
...IT TURNED OUT THIS WAY, TOO.
THANK YOU, SUWA.
YEAH.
IT'S THE OTHERS WHO PULLED THIS OFF
NAH...
I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING.

OCTOBER 7TH
THE LETTER'S ENTRIES... THE NEXT ONE IS THE DAY OF THE ATHLETIC FESTIVAL.
SUWA...
FOR NOW, I'M GOING TO STOP RELYING ON THE LETTER.
OKAY.
WELL, I THINK I'M GONNA HIT THE SACK.
RUSTLE
INSTEAD, I'M GOING TO TRY THINKING ABOUT WHAT WOULD MAKE KAKERU MOST HAPPY...
...AND THEN ACT ON THAT.
YEAH.
SOUNDS LIKE A PLAN.

...BUT I'LL KEEP IT IN THE DRAWER FOR THE TIME BEING.
I'M NOT A LOVE LETTER!
I ALWAYS CARRIED THE LETTER AROUND WITH ME...

MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE YOU RUN WEIRD...
SHUT UP!
I TOLD YOU I COULDN'T DO IT!
THAT WAS SLOW, HAGITA!
OKAY, FINISH LINE.
I THINK YOU'RE ACTUALLY THE SLOWEST RUNNER IN OUR YEAR.
UGH!
I'M A DISGRACE, AND I KNOW IT.
I'M THE SLOWEST KID IN CLASS.

THE TEACHER SAID THAT EVEN IF WE COME IN LAST PLACE, IT DOESN'T MATTER.
THE POINT IS FOR KAKERU TO ENJOY THE ATHLETIC FESTIVAL.
AND KAKERU WOULD ENJOY COMING IN LAST, WOULD HE?
I WANT TO RUN WITH YOU TOO, HAGITA-KUN.
IF THE SIX OF US GET TO RUN TOGETHER...
...I'LL BE HAPPY NO MATTER WHAT PLACE WE'RE IN.
RUNNING IN THE RELAY WILL MAKE YOU POPULAR, HAGITA-KUN.
YEESH. WHEN YOU PUT IT THAT WAY, I DON'T HAVE A CHOICE. FINE, I'LL DO IT.
...
LET'S GO BACK IN.
WHAT'S NEXT AGAIN?
MATH.

HEY.
HM?
ON THE WAY HOME TODAY...
...I WANT YOU TO HANG OUT WITH ME FOR A BIT.
...
UM, OKAY...
NAHO...
HOW ABOUT WALKING ME TO THE DOOR?
YEAH, SURE.
SUWA, I'LL SEE YOU AT THE CLUB.
OKAY. TELL 'EM I GOTTA CLEAN UP HERE BEFORE I GO.

I'M HAPPY.
WE'RE ALONE.
AH...
YOU WALK SLOWLY, DON'T YOU, NAHO?
IT'S LIKE YOU'RE ALWAYS A PACE BEHIND WHOEVER YOU'RE WALKING WITH.
O-OH, REALLY?
ALTHOUGH THAT IS JUST LIKE YOU...

STRANGE...
...BUT I'M HAPPY TO HEAR IT.
IT'S NOT LIKE THAT WAS A COMPLIMENT OR ANYTHING...
KAKERU IS NOTICING EVEN THE SMALLEST DETAILS ABOUT ME.
THE WIND'S GOTTEN COOLER, HUH?
YEAH!

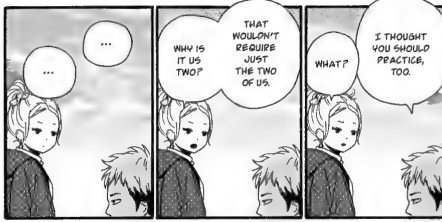
GRAB
TWIST
!
ARE YOU OKAY?!
S...
SORRY!

I'M SORRY.
WHAT SHOULD I DO? I GRABBED RIGHT ONTO KAKERU.
EVEN WITH OTHER PEOPLE AROUND...
HOW EMBARRASSING.

...
WHAT...?
...
NOTHING.
NOTHING, REALLY.

WELL, I'M OFF TO THE CLUB.
BYE BYE.
?
WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT...?
WAS KAKERU GOING TO SAY SOMETHING?
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
I WONDER IF THE LETTER HAD SOMETHING TO SAY...
...ABOUT THIS.
...
THAT'S RIGHT. I LEFT IT AT THE HOUSE.
I DECIDED NOT TO RELY ON IT... YET NOW, WITHOUT THINKING...
Sigh...

I'LL TRY TO DO SOMETHING ON MY OWN.
HUFF
HUFF
WHOMP
YOU DON'T NEED TO PRACTICE ANY MORE.
HOW CAN I RUN EVEN FASTER?
HEY! I GOT FASTER, RIGHT?
THAT WAS FASTER THAN BEFORE, WASN'T IT?
WOW! YOU'RE GETTING FASTER AND FASTER!
SERIOUSLY? AWESOME!
IN FACT, I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU WANTED ME OUT HERE WITH YOU.
THE OTHERS ARE FASTER, SO YOU SHOULD HAVE THEM COACHING YOU.


...
...
WHY IS IT US TWO?
THAT WOULDN'T REQUIRE JUST THE TWO OF US.
WHAT?
I THOUGHT YOU SHOULD PRACTICE, TOO.

THERE'S SOMETHING...
...I WANNA TELL YOU.

I'LL TRY ASKING KAKERU TOMORROW.
HEY.
WANT OUT WITH ME WHILE I PRACTICE TOMORROW, TOO.
WHAT?!

KAKERU...
CAN I WALK YOU TO THE DOOR?
SURE...
I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D ASK ME, NAHO.
U... YEAH.
THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT.
I SEE...
ME, TOO.

I'LL TRY ASKING HIM...
"HAS SOMETHING HAPPENED?"

WHAT'S...
...WRONG...
...KAKERU?
NOTHING.
SORRY.
WELL...
BYE BYE. SEE YOU TOMORROW.
KAKERU...
WHAT'S WRONG?
I'M SORRY... I COULDN'T DO ANYTHING...

SUWA...
DID YOUR LETTER SAY ANYTHING...
...ABOUT KAKERU TODAY?
SUWA...
NOPE.
NOTHING FOR TODAY.
...
I SEE...
BUT I THOUGHT...
...YOU WEREN'T GONNA RELY ON THE LETTER FOR NOW.
TRUE...
BUT, I'M WORRIED ABOUT KAKERU...

...AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.
RELY ON US, TOO.
DON'T PUT ALL YOUR CHIPS ON THE LETTER.
YOU'VE GOT THESE GUYS RIGHT BEHIND YOU.
EVERY-ONE...
WHAT'S WRONG?

WHY NOT TRY TALKING WITH THEM?
YOU'RE TROUBLED...
...ABOUT KAKERU?
WELL... UH...
YEAH?
KAKERU'S BEEN ACTING...
...A LITTLE WEIRD.

HE HOLDS OUT HIS HAND AND DOESN'T SAY A WORD.
LIKE THIS.
AND WHAT I ASK HIM WHAT IT'S FOR, HE WON'T ANSWER.
ACTING WEIRD, YOU SAY?
HE MAY HAVE SOMETHING WEIGHING ON HIS MIND.
HA HA HA!
...
HE HAD A SAD EXPRESSION ON HIS FACE...
..SO I THOUGHT MAYBE SOMETHING HAD HAPPENED.
I'M PRETTY SURE...
..KAKERU JUST WANTED TO HOLD HANDS WITH YOU.
?

HOLD HANDS WITH ME?!
OF COURSE HE'D LOOK SAD!
HOLD HANDS WITH THE POOR GUY!
...
EH?!
I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT...
YEAH, SAME.
I WOULD'VE SAID RIGHT OUT, "HEY, LET'S HOLD HANDS."
NOT VERY MANLY OF KAKERU, THOUGH.
IS THAT WHAT IT WAS?
IT MEANT HE WANTED TO HOLD HANDS...
I TOLD YOU BEFORE, THERE'S NOTHING YOU HAVE TO HIDE FROM US.
THAT'S RIGHT. TALK TO US MORE!
YOU BOTH OVERTHINK THINGS ALONE.
THAT'S SOMETHING YOU AND KAKERU HAVE IN COMMON.

NOTHING TO HIDE...
WHY NOT TELL THEM EVERYTHING?
"ARE YOU HIDING SOMETHING FROM US?"
...IF I TOLD THEM ALL ABOUT THE LETTER?
I'VE THOUGHT ABOUT IT BEFORE. WHAT WOULD HAPPEN...
ABOUT KAKERU!
I'M NOT ESPECIALLY HIDING IT...
...BUT I FIGURED YOU'D NEVER BELIEVE ME, EVEN IF I TOLD YOU.
WE'LL BELIEVE YOU, SO TELL US!

PUT SIMPLY...
...I GOT A LETTER...
...FROM MYSELF TEN YEARS IN THE FUTURE.
SO...
WHAT KIND OF REACTION IS THAT?
I CAN'T READ THAT EXPRESSION.
...FROM MY FUTURE SELF.
I GOT A LETTER...

I WONDER IF THEY'LL BE SHOCKED.
IT SAID, "I WANT YOU TO SAVE KAKERU."
MAYBE THEY WON'T BELIEVE ME.
MAYBE THEY'LL LAUGH AT ME.
THAT'S WHY I WANT ALL OF YOU TO HELP ME...
SURE.
OF COURSE WE WILL.
YOU FINALLY ASKED US FOR HELP.
LET'S GO OUTSIDE AND TALK.
THERE'S SOMETHING WE WANNA SHOW YOU.
THEY GET IT...!

HOW...?
Takako Chino
Azusa Mutasaka

HAGITA!
HAGITA, TOO. YESTERDAY AT THE PARK, HE SAID THERE WAS SOMETHING HE WANTED TO TELL ME...
YESTERDAY? AT THE PARK?
SORRY FOR KEEPING QUIET ABOUT IT.
WE GOT LETTERS FROM THE FUTURE, TOO.

HE SAID HE GOT ONE, TOO.
ALL OF US...
Saku Hagita
WHAT, WERE YOU TWO ON A DATE?
WHO IN THEIR RIGHT MIND WOULD GO ON A DATE WITH THIS DUMBBELL?!
JUST GET THE LETTER OUT!
...GOT A LETTER.
ALL OF US HAVE THE SAME GOAL.
LET'S SAVE KAKERU...

...TOGETHER!

...WHO WON'T HAVE CHANGED, EVEN TEN YEARS FROM NOW.

FRIENDS...

I HAVE FRIENDS.

...TOGETHER.

LET'S SAVE KAKERU...